

## The Real Reason Behind The Trouble In The Middle East

The trouble in the Middle East is in the news again and with it all the fresh speculation and rhetoric about why it is happening. Some say it is over the land, others say it is the oil, others say it is religion. The fact of the matter is that the entire situation in the Middle East and the differences between Israel and the Muslim nations goes back thousands of years to two brothers, one names Isaac and one named Ishmael.

The story goes like this, Abraham and his wife Sarah wanted a child all their lives and as they were getting very old with he being 86 and Sarah at 76 and felt God wasn't going to keep the promise to them, Abraham slept with Sarah's servant Hagar by arrangement from Sarah and a child by the name of Ishmael was born from this. God promised Abraham that he would establish a covenant with Isaac's descendants.

According to the Old Testament, in Genesis God told Hagar that Ishmael would be a wild man with his hand against every man and every man's hand against him. At a feast to celebrate the weaning of Isaac from his mother Sarah, some fourteen years later, Ishmael began to show the nature God said he would by mocking and making fun of his little half brother. By this time, Sarah had already been disgusted with them for some time and she demanded that Abraham throw them out of the household saying that the son of a slave would not be an heir with her son, Isaac. Abraham was against this because he loved Ishmael even though he was an incredible pain to say the least.

God settled the argument by telling Abraham that he was to do as Sarah said and that he would also make a nation from the seed of Ishmael as well, but it would be through Isaac that his descendants, the Jews would be named.

So, Hagar and Ishmael were sent away just as God commanded but He kept His word regarding them as well. It is stated in Genesis 21 that God was with him and that as he grew in the wilderness he became an expert with a bow and that his mother brought him a wife from Egypt.

So why all the fighting? The Arab nations, descendants of Ishmael have way more land than does Israel, but for them it all goes back to the birthright. They still feel that Ishmael was the first born child of Abraham and that as such they are entitled to everything.

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